



St Peter's Parish e-newsletter

31st March 2020

www.stpeterealing.org.uk

The Vicar's Letter

Last week a good friend of mine, Revd Preb Graham Noyce (he won't mind me naming him...I hope) included me in a chain letter. Normally I avoid chain letters, they are questionable and often a scam or are just an annoyance. But coming from Fr Graham I gave it a second look. The letter outlined a very clear and simple process involving few people, with clear aims. In naming only two recipients, insisting on the use of Bcc to keep addresses private and stipulating the title to be used in the subject box, the letter aimed to be completely clear and above board.

It was a poetry chain. The recipient was asked to send a poem to the first email address listed in the letter. Then remove the said email address, move the second address to the position of the first and add your own email address in its place. Then send the letter, requesting a poem, to up to 20 friends.

Every day since I have had the pleasure of receiving poems of poets I'd not come across or have been reminded of poets or poems I had forgotten. The words have taken me far away to common places or ordinariness that have been quite a pleasurable respite in the darkness of the past week or two. It has also encouraged me to go back to words I have found comforting in the past and renew my relationship with writers I have enjoyed.

I've reflected through this experience on our worship last Sunday. It was an absolute delight to have so many of you joining in, and I found great comfort in sharing in worship with you, even if it was through the computer screen. I realised it is the words, the Lord's prayer, the readings and the canticles, the sacrament of the Word that drew us together and opened a door to a realisation that God was and is with us, even if geographically we are kept apart. Jesus said, "When two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Matthew 18.20). Jesus' words are about intention, intending to be together which of course we are when we Zoom or WhatsApp or Facebook. We may be separated by the need to combat a virus but in God's love we are eternally united in the fellowship of the faithful.

St Peters Pastoral Assistance Programme.

Members have volunteered to shop, chat on the phone or collect prescriptions. Margaret Joachim is co-ordinating this and if you'd like to help, if you know someone who could do with some help or indeed if you yourself need help then get in touch. The phone number to use is 07595 911178. In an attachment sent out last week about managing COVID19 we also included a form of words for neighbours. I commend contacting your neighbours if you can. Don't wait for us if you identify a need. If we can help you let us know.

Finding your Way round your Bible

During this time of self-isolation many of us find great consolation in continuing a time of prayer and Bible study. Many others of us are finding that although the usual busyness of life has made this a difficult pattern to maintain, the last few days has led us to want to incorporate more prayer and spiritual reading into our lives.

Contact Information: The parish office is closed. Fr David can be contacted: 020 8997 1620; 07976905294; david.neno@london.anglican.org

David has sent the links to Common Worship Daily Prayer to help us join in with the daily offices of Morning and Evening Prayer, which he will continue to say in his study at 9am and 5pm.

I thought I would send a few thoughts on finding your way round your Bible. They are deliberately simple and are only “helpful if they are helpful” – they were how I began to find my way around my Bible.

So, imagine your Bible is not a book but a book shop:

Holding your Bible spine down on your palms, notice where it falls open. With almost all versions you will find yourself looking at the book of Psalms as it is the middle-ish of the Bible. Holding it open at Psalms you find yourself in the Poetry section of the bookshop.

The Poetry section contains not just the poems, songs or hymns of the Psalms, but also the beautiful Song of Solomon or Song of Songs. Interspersed on the shelves of this section you will see some Wisdom writings – Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Full of pithy moral insights couched in richly imaginative language; the more closely you read them the more you can see why they have been put in this section. They reflect the human experience in the face of divine might and majesty – songs of the head and the heart.

I suggest that before we explore the other floors and sections to the left (Law and History) and right (Prophecy, Gospels and Letters +) of Poetry, we rest here for a while.

The Psalms are often called “The Psalms of David”. King David lived c 1000 BC and though some of what is contained in the book may well date from this time, it is probably best seen as a collection of hymns, prayers, complaints and laments put together by its Jewish writers over a much longer and more recent period.

The longer we spend in the Psalms the more we learn about these writers and their joys, grievances and preoccupations. In this current crisis it might be more helpful to focus on those offering reassurance, encouragement and comfort. Perhaps take these ones down to read first:

Psalms 8, 19, 23, 27, 42, 46, 67, 84, 91, 93, 98, 100, 113, 121, 122, 131, 133, 139, 150 (NB this is the numbering system for “Reformed” versions of the Bible. Roman Catholic versions are slightly different.)

If you are in the mood for a longer poem then spend some time two shelves down in Solomon’s Song of Songs. Some have suggested that this is an allegory of the soul’s love for God, others that it is what it says it is: a gorgeous love poem. Whatever you decide, it is good company on an empty afternoon.

Similarly good company though in a very different way is the writer of Ecclesiastes – one shelf up from Song of Songs. Also traditionally said to have been written by King Solomon, the writer of Ecclesiastes muses on the meaninglessness of human existence and there being “nothing new under the sun”. You might find him a gloomy companion under these circumstances or be refreshed that whatever happens we have been here before – and emerged at the other end.

Few readers work their way through Proverbs in one sitting. With no disrespect to the writer or content, that would be like reading the backs of umpteen cereal boxes – or tweets - in one go. Like our modern understanding of proverbs, these are – for the most part – little snap-shots or nuggets of wisdom. Have a look at Proverbs 15 for an idea of this and for some sayings that are still part of our currency today.

For slightly longer “posts” have a look at: Proverbs 2, 8, 9, 21 verses 10-31.

Thus refreshed and with both wisdom and a song in our hearts, we’ll go in search of treasures left and right next time.

Susan Peatfield

Quiz – week 1 as set by Revd Dr Margaret Joachim

You'll have to do some thinking about these questions – the answers will not necessarily come straight out of Google! Sometimes there may be more than one answer.

1. Why might you go to Paradise by way of Kensal Green?
2. What could you make with *Malus domestica*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Saccharum officinarum* and H₂O?
3. What do a type of bean, an 18th century composer of harpsichord music, two or more Italian cats and a famous tenor have in common?
4. If M (i) has 27, M (ii) has 16 and L has 24, how many has J got?
5. What links Baikonur, South Uist, Cape Canaveral and Woomera?
6. What or where are, and what would you do with the:
 - o Wardian Case
 - o Wheatstone Bridge
 - o Phrygian Mode
 - o Islets of Langerhans
 - o Sound of Sleat

Answers next week!

Remember:

Signs of Hope.

Candles in windows (being very careful and aware!) Sunday evenings 7-8pm. As you light it you might say the Trisagion: "Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal, have mercy on us".

Clap for our Carers: Thursday 2nd April at 8pm <https://clapforourcarers.co.uk/>

Worship update.

We are still using Zoom as that seemed to work well, especially as we developed the 'etiquette' of muting our microphones.

Thursday @ 9.30pm Compline

Sunday 9.15am Pebbles/Steppingstones; 10am Morning Worship for Palm Sunday.

You can download Zoom onto your device or you can call in by phone, dialling the number given in the email. You will also need to have downloaded the Daily Prayer app onto your device or find it via the Church of England website (www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer)

Music suggestions:

Alison Germany suggests:

Taize Nada te turbe <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goI-BoDD7CI>; An English translation: <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2014/11-july/faith/faith-features/whoever-has-god-wants-for-nothing>

Paul Simon 'Graceland' album (reissue 2012): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uy5T6s25XK4&list=OLAK5uy_kz3bY6FGiqDt6KETg78vZxH3ibQT7YWzI

Purcell 'Rejoyce in the Lord Alway' (Collegium Vocale Gent): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6fNcuvRbjo>

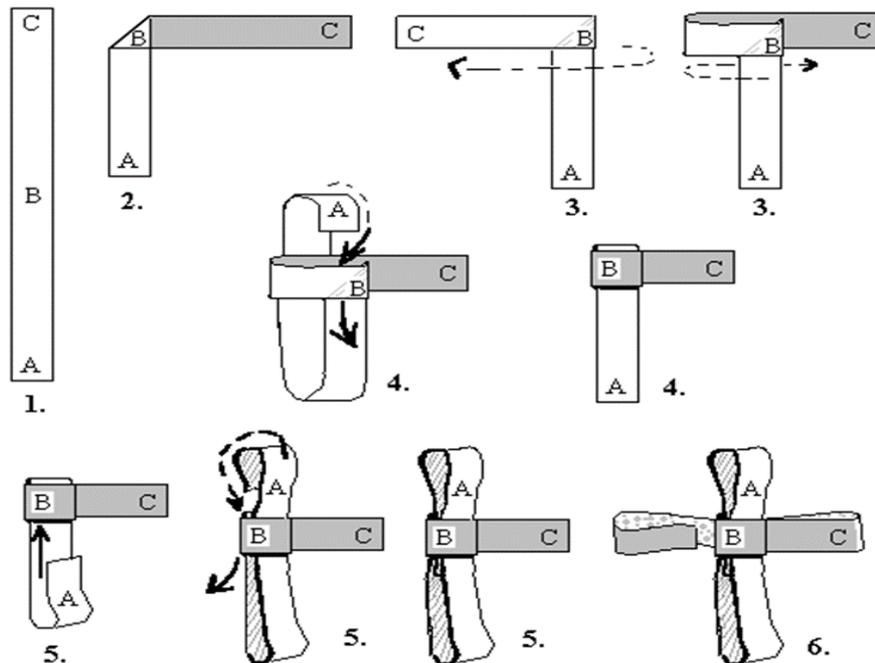
(you can cut and paste these into your search engine or click on them here. As Alison says these are personal choices)

Crosses for Palm Sunday.

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As we can't get palm crosses to you this year how about making your own. You don't need palm fronds or the like, though if you can get your hands on some plant like material that would work that would be great. I made two using the guide below with strips of paper. The first with a 1cm wide strip of A4 and the second with two 1cm strips of A4 sellotaped together. Have a go ready for Sunday.

HOW TO MAKE A PALM CROSS



Prayer requests:

Please pray for: Peter Tilly; Suzi; Cicely Pratt; Elaine Dunkley; Keith Win; John Pullan.
 Those we can't be with now and weigh heavy on our hearts.
 Carers and health workers; those keeping supplies lines operational
 Each other and ourselves.
 (if you'd like names added to this list please send them to Fr David)

Keep us, good Lord,
 under the shadow of your mercy.
 Sustain and support the anxious,
 be with those who care for the sick,
 and lift up all who are brought low;
 that we may find comfort
 knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
 in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

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